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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01
	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	R-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9665
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 002642

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER
LONDON FOR GURNEY
PARIS FOR NEARY
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL. 09/06/11

TAGS: [PGOV PHUM ZI](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR BULAWAYO MAYORAL VOTE AND TWO BY-
ELECTIONS

CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF MATT HARRINGTON. REASONS:
1.5 (B) AND (D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) THE VOTERS OF BULAWAYO WILL CHOOSE A NEW MAYOR AND THE VOTERS OF MAKONI WEST A NEW MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT SEPTEMBER 8-9, WHILE CHIKOMBA WILL CHOOSE A SUCCESSOR TO THE LATE WAR VETERAN LEADER CHENJERAI "HITLER" HUNZVI IN A BY-ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 22-23. THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD HAS BEEN MOSTLY PEACEFUL IN BULAWAYO, ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN ACCUSATIONS OF VOTE-BUYING AND OF PADDING OF THE VOTERS ROLL. THE MDC IS EXPECTED TO WIN, BUT THE KEY ISSUE IS WHETHER THE OPPOSITION PARTY CAN MAINTAIN ITS HUGE MARGIN OF VICTORY FROM THE JUNE 2000 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION -- IN WHICH IT WON 160,000 VOTES TO ZANU-PF'S 20,000 -- AND THUS PROJECT A SENSE OF POLITICAL MOMENTUM. IN MAKONI WEST, LOCATED ON THE BORDER BETWEEN THE MDC STRONGHOLD OF MANICALAND PROVINCE AND ZANU-PF'S HEARTLAND OF MASHONALAND EAST, THE RULING PARTY HAS EMPLOYED TACTICS OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION, ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY ON A MORE LIMITED SCALE THAN IN PREVIOUS BY-ELECTIONS IN BINDURA, BIKITA WEST, AND MARONDERA. THE MDC HAS BEEN FORCED TO CONDUCT A LOW-KEY DOOR-TO-DOOR CAMPAIGN, AND HAD CONSIDERED SEEKING A COURT-ORDERED DELAY UNTIL RESTORATION OF THE RULE OF LAW. UNTIL THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS, THE CAMPAIGN IN CHIKOMBA HAS BEEN MOSTLY FREE OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION, LIKELY BECAUSE HUNZVI WON BY ALMOST 9,000 VOTES AND ZANU-PF DOES NOT FEEL PARTICULARLY THREATENED THERE. END SUMMARY.

BULAWAYO

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2. (C) THE RUN-UP TO THE SEPTEMBER 8-9 BULAWAYO MAYORAL ELECTION HAS BEEN MOSTLY PEACEFUL AND THE OPPOSITION MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) HAS BEEN ABLE TO CAMPAIGN FREELY. ZANU-PF POLITICAL COMMISSAR -- AND POLITBURO MEMBER -- SIKHANYISO NDLOVU TOLD POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF THAT HE AND FORMER ARMY COMMANDER SOLOMON MUJURU HAD ORDERED JOSEPH CHINOTIMBA AND HIS MILITIA TO STAY AWAY FROM THE BULAWAYO CAMPAIGN, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE THE PARTY'S USUAL TACTICS OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION WOULD ONLY BACKFIRE IN MATABELELAND. THAT SAID, HOWEVER, SENIOR MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) OFFICIALS EXPRESSED CONCERN TO US ABOUT TWO TACTICS BEING EMPLOYED BY ZANU-PF IN THE BULAWAYO CAMPAIGN. ACCORDING TO MDC VICE-PRESIDENT GIBSON SIBANDA AND ELECTIONS DIRECTOR PAUL THEMBA NYATHI, THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT THE VOTERS ROLL IS BEING PADDED WITH ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS, ALTHOUGH THEY DID NOT YET HAVE A SENSE OF THE SCOPE OF THAT EFFORT. THAT CONCERN HAS BEEN EXACERBATED BY THE FACT THAT THE VOTERS ROLL HAD NOT YET BEEN MADE AVAILABLE FOR THE REQUISITE PUBLIC INSPECTION, NINE DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION. IN ADDITION, RULING PARTY HEAVYWEIGHTS SUCH AS INFORMATION MINISTER JONATHAN MOYO, LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTER IGNATIUS CHOMBO, AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, GENDER, AND EMPLOYMENT CREATION DEPUTY MINISTER SHUVAI MAHOFA ARE HANDING OUT LARGE AMOUNTS OF CASH AT POLITICAL RALLIES. ALTHOUGH SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF WOMEN HAVE BEEN ATTENDING THESE RALLIES AND

ACCEPTING THE HANDOUTS, IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT IT WILL AFFECT THE WAY THEY VOTE.

13. (C) BOTH ZANU-PF AND THE MDC HAVE CHOSEN AS THEIR CANDIDATES TECHNOCRATS WITH LONG RECORDS OF SERVICE TO THE CITY. THE MDC'S JAPHET NDABENI NCUBE HAS SERVED AS BULAWAYO'S DIRECTOR OF HOUSING FOR 15 YEARS, WHILE GEORGE MLILO FROM ZANU-PF HAS BEEN THE CITY'S WATER ENGINEER OF LONGSTANDING. ACCORDING TO THEMBA NYATHI, MLILO
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HAS BEEN TRYING TO DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM ZANU-PF, REGULARLY URGING VOTERS AT PUBLIC RALLIES TO CAST THEIR BALLOTS FOR THE CANDIDATE OF THEIR CHOOSING, REGARDLESS OF THE PARTY THEY REPRESENT. MOST OBSERVERS AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT THE PARTY LABEL WILL CARRY MUCH MORE WEIGHT WITH VOTERS THAN THE CREDENTIALS OF THE INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATES.

14. (C) BULAWAYO, WHERE RESIDENTS HAVE LONG BEEN BRUTALIZED AND MARGINALIZED BY THE MUGABE GOVERNMENT, IS THE HEART OF MDC TERRITORY. IN THE JUNE 2000 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION, THE OPPOSITION PARTY WON 160,000 VOTES IN BULAWAYO TO ZANU-PF'S 20,000. FEW OBSERVERS DOUBT THAT THE MDC WILL WIN THE MAYORAL RACE, BUT THEY POINT OUT THAT THE KEY ISSUE IS THE MARGIN OF VICTORY. A LARGE MARGIN FOR THE MDC WOULD CREATE A SENSE OF MOMENTUM FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN 2002 AND LIKELY WILL EMBOLDEN NERVOUS MDC SUPPORTERS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY TO COME OUT ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION DAY. A MARGIN SMALLER THAN THAT WHICH OBTAINED IN JUNE 2000 WOULD PROVIDE AMMUNITION FOR ZANU-PF'S CONTENTION THAT IT HAS MADE INROADS IN URBAN AREAS SINCE THE PARLIAMENTARY VOTE. THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT BULAWAYO IS AN EXPECTATIONS GAME, AND A SMALLER THAN EXPECTED VICTORY FOR THE MDC WILL BE SPUN BY THE RULING PARTY AS A SIGN OF ITS IMPROVED POLITICAL FORTUNES. THEMBA NYATHI ADMITTED AS MUCH WHEN HE TOLD US THAT THE MDC'S BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN BULAWAYO IS OVERCOMING

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9666
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VOTER COMPLACENCY AND GETTING ITS SUPPORTERS TO THE POLLS.
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MAKONI WEST

15. (C) THE BY-ELECTION IN MAKONI WEST, ALSO SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 8-9, WILL FILL THE SEAT LEFT VACANT BY THE DEATH OF THE LATE MINISTER OF DEFENSE MOVEN MAHACHI. MAHACHI WON 55% OF THE VOTE IN JUNE 2000, BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT WHICH WAY THE ELECTION WILL GO THIS TIME. MAKONI WEST IS LOCATED IN THE STRONGLY PRO-MDC MANICALAND PROVINCE, BUT IT IS ON THE BORDER WITH MASHONALAND EAST, A ZANU-PF STRONGHOLD.

16. (C) WE UNDERSTAND FROM SEVERAL SOURCES THAT ZANU-PF'S WAR VETERANS AND PARTY THUGS HAVE ESTABLISHED AT LEAST FIVE BASE CAMPS IN THE CONSTITUENCY TO COORDINATE A CAMPAIGN OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION AGAINST SUSPECTED OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS. TIM SHEEHY, WHO WILL HEAD THE EUROPEAN UNION'S NEW ELECTION SUPPORT UNIT IN HARARE, MET WITH A NUMBER OF LOCAL RESIDENTS IN MAKONI WEST ON SEPTEMBER 5. DURING HIS VISIT, SHEEHY WAS TOLD BY A PROMINENT CLERGYMAN THAT THE CAMPAIGN HAS BECOME MORE VIOLENT IN RECENT WEEKS, AND THAT MDC SUPPORTERS HAVE BEEN THE VICTIMS IN THE

OVERWHELMING NUMBER OF INCIDENTS. THE HOUSE OF THE CONSTITUENCY'S MDC CHAIRMAN WAS BURNED DOWN, MANY RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN FORCED BY WAR VETERANS TO ATTEND ALL-NIGHT POLITICAL RALLIES, AND TEACHERS AT SOME SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN THREATENED WITH PHYSICAL HARM FOR ALLEGEDLY SUPPORTING THE OPPOSITION. THE CLERGYMAN ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE PADDING OF THE VOTERS ROLL, NOTING REPORTS THAT VOTERS CONTINUE TO BE REGISTERED, LONG AFTER THE LEGAL PERIOD FOR DOING SO ENDED. IN ITS WRITTEN PRE-ELECTION REPORT, THE ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK -- WHICH PROVIDES DOMESTIC MONITORS AT ALL POLLING STATIONS -- DESCRIBED THE CONSTITUENCY AS
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"TENSE, WITH REPORTS THAT INTIMIDATION AND VOTE-BUYING ARE RIFE."

17. (C) MDC ELECTIONS DIRECTOR THEMBA-NYATHI TOLD US THAT, AS A RESULT OF THE CLIMATE OF INTIMIDATION, HIS PARTY HAS HAD TO CONDUCT A LOW-KEY DOOR-TO-DOOR CAMPAIGN. THE MDC LEADERSHIP HAD CONSIDERED ASKING THE COURT TO DELAY THE ELECTION INDEFINITELY, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE RULE OF LAW WAS RESTORED, BUT ULTIMATELY DECIDED AGAINST THAT COURSE OF ACTION.

CHIKOMBA

18. (C) A SECOND BY-ELECTION IS SCHEDULED IN THE MASHONALAND EAST CONSTITUENCY OF CHIKOMBA SEPTEMBER 22-33 TO FILL THE SEAT LEFT VACANT BY LATE WAR VETERAN LEADER CHENJERAI "HITLER" HUNZVI. SINCE HUNZVI WON 65 PERCENT OF THE BALLOTS CAST -- BY 7,000 VOTES -- IN JUNE 2000. GIVEN THAT MARGIN OF VICTORY AND CHIKOMBA'S LOCATION IN THE ZANU-PF HEARTLAND OF MASHONALAND EAST, THE RULING PARTY LIKELY WILL RETAIN THIS SEAT. THE CAMPAIGN HAS, SURPRISINGLY, BEEN MOSTLY PEACEFUL, THANKS TO THE INSISTENCE BY ZANU-PF'S PROVINCIAL CHAIRMAN THAT HE WOULD NOT TOLERATE THE TACTICS USED BY THE PARTY IN OTHER BY-ELECTIONS. IN ADDITION, WE UNDERSTAND THAT HUNZVI'S PREDECESSOR IN CHIKOMBA, SOLOMON MUJURU -- WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE RULING PARTY POLITBURO AND A RETIRED ARMY COMMANDER WHO RETAINS THE LOYALTIES OF MANY ACTIVE DUTY OFFICERS -- HAS BEEN WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES TO ENSURE THAT THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD IS PEACEFUL. ZANU-PF COULD HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IT HAD CHIKOMBA IN THE BAG SO IT COULD AFFORD TO RUN A PEACEFUL CAMPAIGN. DURING THE PAST WEEK, HOWEVER, WE HAVE HEARD REPORTS OF SOME VIOLENT CLASHES BETWEEN MDC AND ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS.

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ELECTION OBSERVATION

19. (C) EMBASSY OFFICERS PLAN TO OBSERVE ALL THREE ELECTIONS AND ARE COORDINATING OUR EFFORTS WITH OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS.

ROTH

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